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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/638,241	08/14/2000	Bret A. Ferree	026,314-018	9686
34263 7590 10/08/2008 O'Melveny & Myers LLP IP&T Calendar Department LA-1118 400 South Hope Street Los Angeles, CA 90071-2899				
EXAMINER				
WOO, JULIAN W				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3773				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
10/08/2008		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/638,241

Applicant(s)

FERREE, BRET A.

Examiner

Julian W. Woo

Art Unit

3773

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 July 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 12, 13 and 16-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 12, 13 and 16-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/C2)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 5/20/08
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
 2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
 3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
 4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.
2. Claims 12, 13, and 16-18 is under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Baumgartner (5,702,454). Baumgartner discloses the invention substantially as claimed. Baumgartner discloses, at least in figures 4e, 5, 6, and 7 and in col. 2, lines 51-54 and col. 5, lines 11-44; a method of preventing nucleus pulposus in an intradiscal space from extruding through a defect in the annulus fibrosis, the annular fibrosis having an outer layer and at least one inner layer, consisting essentially of the steps of inserting no more than one implant (a "single-piece" combination of 7 and 20 as seen in fig. 6 or 7) through an elongate tubular member (6), where the device occludes the defect while allowing compression and distraction of the disc with respect to normal spinal

movement (i.e., elastic deformation "under stress"). However, Baumgartner does not specifically disclose that the implant as seen in fig. 6 or 7 includes a flexible device as claimed. Nevertheless, Baumgartner teaches a flexible device (the "last support member" to be inserted into an intradiscal space--a combination of 7 and 18' or 7 and 18, as seen in fig. 4e and 5) into a defect (5) in the annulus fibrosis, the flexible device having a structure with at least two appendages (18' or 18) made from a shape-memory material (e.g., "elastically deformable expansion elements") and hydrogel. Baumgartner also teaches advancing the flexible device distally beyond the outer layer in the annulus fibrosis, expanding the appendages of the flexible device by allowing the device to return to a memorized shape (18) substantially larger than the defect in the outer layer of the annulus fibrosis, where the flexible device prevents escape of nucleus pulposus through the defect (by blocking of the defect), where the flexible device has a structure with at least two appendages joined to form an interior angle and an exterior angle, the interior angle being smaller than the exterior angle during insertion through the elongate member (see fig. 5) and where the interior angle between appendages is larger after deployment (see fig. 4e) than during the step of inserting the implant into the defect, where inserting the device includes compacting the device into a compressed form (see fig. 5) for introduction. Thus, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify at least the "last support member" in the implant chain (i.e., the last element 7 in the implant of fig. 6 or 7), so that it has a flexible device as claimed. Such a modification would prevent the implant from leaving

the intradiscal space through the aperture that had accommodated the elongate tubular member.

Response to Amendment

3. Applicant's arguments filed on July 25, 2008 and regarding the rejection of claims based on the Baumgartner reference have been fully considered but are moot in view of new grounds of rejection.

Conclusion

4. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Julian W. Woo whose telephone number is (571) 272-4707. The examiner can normally be reached Mon.-Fri., 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM Eastern Time, alternate Fridays off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jackie Ho can be reached on (571) 272-4696. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Julian W. Woo/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3773

October 7, 2008